Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Visit to Anglian Water – Water Recycling Centre, Clacton on Sea – 25 June 2025

Anglian Water:

Mark Hinson – Water Recycling Operations Manager
Craig Barrowcliffe – Works Technician-Process Controller
Karl Nokes – Water Recycling Operations Support Manager
Emily Linsdell – Regional Engagement Advisor

TDC:

Councillor Graham Steady – Chairman of Community Leadership O&S
Councillor Adrian Smith – Portfolio Holder for the Environment & ICT
Grant Fenton-Jones – Environmental Health Manager
Katie Koppenaal – Democratic Services Officer
Michael Cross – Assistant Manager Coastal Engineering
Liam Noah – Seafront Services Manager
James Bates – Environmental Protection Officer
Jennie Wilkinson – Property and Projects Manager

Summary of the Water Recycling Process

Councillors and Officers were shown around the site by Mark, Craig, Karl and Emily. Mark informed them that the Water Recycling Centre (WRC) at Clacton, Holland Haven, takes wastewater from the Clacton, Weely and Thorpe-le-Soken area. During storm conditions, the site takes a minimum flow of 317 litres a second. He also reported that the wastewater on site is a mix of sewage and used water (such as from washing machines, sinks and showers) from homes and businesses, as well as rainwater from any surface water misconnections. The water that they receive goes through our treatment process, which is mostly natural, before being returned safely to the environment.

Mark explained that the first stage of the treatment process removes un-flushable material such as wet wipes, from the wastewater, this is screened out and is the only part of the treatment process which generates waste for landfill. Grit and stones are then settled out and are sent off for cleaning so they can be re-used as aggregate in roads and construction. The wastewater then undergoes settlement to remove solids and oil, before moving onto the secondary treatment process. Secondary treatment can be done in one of two ways, but at Clacton Anglian Water mix the wastewater with an activated sludge solution which contains micro-organisms that breakdown harmful substances

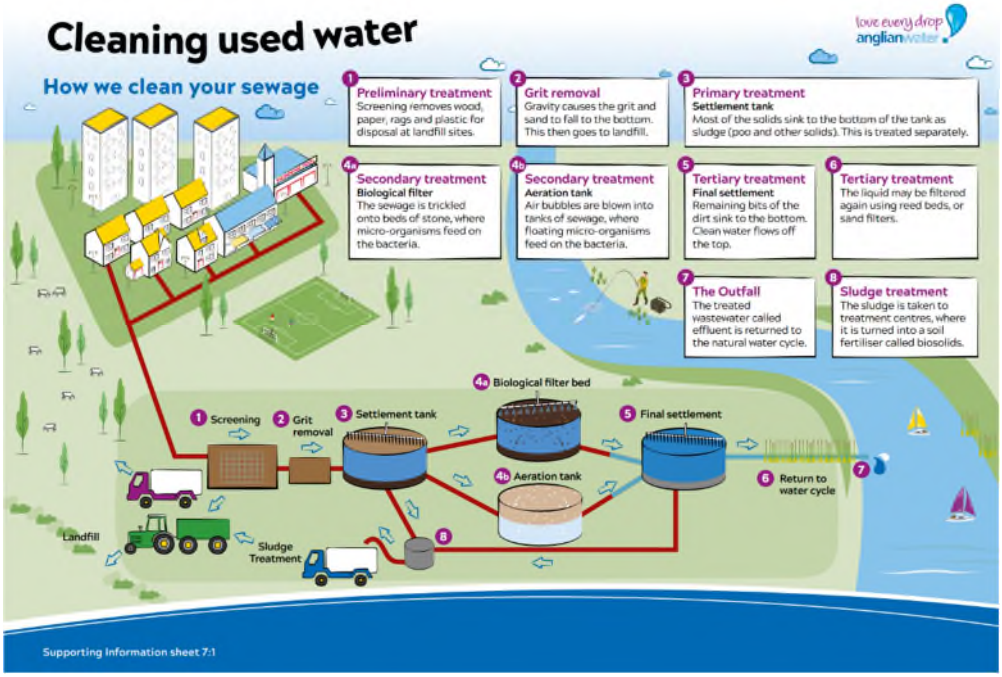
and bacteria. The last stage of treatment is final settlement to remove any remaining solids.

Mark continued to explain that at some sites, based on the receiving environment, Anglian Water undertake additional tertiary treatment to clean the water to an even higher standard. This is typically done where there is a bathing water, shellfishery or SSSI and would involve UV treatment, reedbeds or sand filters.

It was reported to Councillors and Officers that the solids that are removed (known as sludge) are then sent to one of the ten Sludge Treatment Centres (STC) where it is further treated and made into a safe biosolids product for farmers to use on agricultural land. Mark explained that this additional treatment process also produces natural gas, which, through combined heat and power units, produces electricity which they use to power the site and export to the grid. Sludge from Clacton WRC goes to Colchester STC.

Mark further explained that in some cases, during heavy rainfall, if the site becomes inundated with surface water, Anglian Water may not be able to treat it all. In these cases, the storm overflow would activate. Due to when it operates, the vast majority of what is discharged is rainwater, which Mark stated that they know is not good enough and so, they are investing more than ever to tackle storm overflows. Mark informed us of Anglian Water's proposed business plan for 2025 is geared to tackle storm overflows and address the highest priority overflows soonest. It contains their largest ever investment, including £1 billion tackling storm overflows, whilst their total environmental enhancement spend will double to £4 billion.

Below is a diagram outlining the wastewater process (to note that at Clacton uses 4b not 4a and there is no 6):



A.1 APPENDIX E

During the tour, Anglian Water spoke about the importance of sewers being used correctly and shared their 'Just Bin It' messaging. Anglian Water would like to share the below in relation to this:

"Last year our teams cleared 35,000 blockages from the sewer network. 80% of these were avoidable and were caused by rubbish such as wet wipes, sanitary products, nappies and cooking oils which should have gone in the bin and not down the toilet or sink. Wipes are the most common problem – around half a million (9,500 packets) are flushed into our region's sewers every day."

They have also shared some links that may be helpful:

Anglian Water's 2025-2030 Plan - https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/corporate/plans-and-reports/our-plan-2025-to-2030-pr24/

'Just Bin It' - https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/services/wastewater-treatment/down-plugholes-and-toilets/